1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

barber and still carries out special chores for his former master. He also claims that he gives the senior barber about fifty percent of all his present receipts. As yet he does not know how to cut face marks, remove the uvula, or perform circumcisions, and so he attends all of these ceremonies with the master barber so that he may continue his education. He hopes that by the next year he will be allowed to perform some of these more advanced operations under supervision. When he has completely finished his education, it will not be necessary to do any chores for the senior or give him any commission. Nevertheless the former apprentice should always pay his respects to his ex-master and give him gifts from time to time.

Other apprentices living with strangers claimed they felt more freedom in the household of the stranger and thus live away from home for their training even though they practice the same craft as their father. Many said that they would return home eventually but for the present it was pleasant to travel around seeing other parts of Bornu. This freedom refers more specifically to their sexual activity or at least to its discussion since the discipline and respect given to the compound head is the same as elsewhere. However many boys discussed sex in front of the compound head while such behavior would be impossible in their natal family households. Some boys reported that their father was dead and they had been sent off by their families to the household of relatives or friends in order to learn an occupation.

In summary, adolsecence sharply divides men and women. A young girl takes on her role as a married woman and it is within marriage that she completes her education for adulthood in Kanuri society. A woman may divorce later on as indeed most do, then remarry and bear children throughout. However the framework of adult life is entered into at a first marriage sometime around puberty. For the boy, on the other hand, adolescence is a socially recognized state in life entered at circumcision. This stage of life is used to complete the young man's education and equip him with the interpersonal and occupational skills that are required as an adult and a potential family head.

Maturity

The mature man is described by the Kanuri as *rashidi*. Ideally this implies that he is married, has a compound of his own and an occupation, the use of some land for farming, and a recognized position in the community as the head of a compound. It also means that he has a certain degree of independence so that if he wished he could move of his own accord to another community. To be a mature man par excellence, he should also have children and the reputation of a person who does things discreetly and diplomatically. Maturity is not simply a term applied to a period of life. It is also a value judgement describing a proper and desirable behavior of an adult man. It is not just a role but an evaluation of that role.

Most people seemed unable or unwilling to answer the question of age in relation to maturity, and so they fell back on marriage claiming that any married man was in fact a mature adult. However a few, notably high ranking people, did give an age and suggested that a person could not be thought of as being fully mature until he was at least thirty-five, very often forty. After this age he is not sup-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

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posed to divorce so often; he is not supposed to have liaisons with divorced women, and he is supposed to behave in a judicious manner as one of the leading members of his community. Thus many young married men living in or near the compound of an older relative or some non-relative, who might be a political and economic superior, refused to be called mature even when they were married. They claimed that they were still young men and that they had still some way to go before they could be called mature adults. Carrying this point further, men whose occupation required that they remain in close subordinate relationship to a superior for most of their lives limited the application of the word "mature" to themselves, and did so rather proudly. For example, one man of about forty-five, whose father had been a servant of the district head's father and who was himself a lifelong servant of the district head of Magumeri, accepted a definition of himself in general as a mature man. Indeed he said, laughingly, he would soon be an old man. He explained that he was mature because he had a married daughter, a farm, a nice compound, a wife who he asserted proudly had stayed with him for eight years, and for all these reasons he thought he should be dubbed "mature." When asked in the same context if he would ever go to live somewhere independently of his district head without the latter's instructions, he quickly replied, "Oh no! In that sense, I am still a small boy." This was in no way shameful for him since his recognition in the community and his status in the society as a whole stands upon his subordinate relationship to the district head.

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There is no similar status term among women comparable to the male term for the mature man whose meaning also embodies the same ideology of adult behavior. The woman who has had a child can be referred to by a special term that indicates that she has achieved the important goal of motherhood and added a new member to her husband's household and to both of their families. Middle-aged women can be referred to by another term which distinguishes them from younger woman and from old women whether or not they have given birth to children. In practice such terms are not observed in common use, the woman's status and age being described in other terms.

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Ideally an adult woman should be married and should desire to remain so. She should be obedient to her husband, have and want children, and perform her womanly tasks promptly and efficiently while remaining chaste within the walls of her husband's compound, leaving it only when absolutely necessary. She should, however, maintain contact with her own family and return there for important family ceremonies. As one would expect, those who come closest to this ideal in their own behavior often tend to agree with this image of womanly perfection and give it their unqualified support. However those who divorce often and easily tend to qualify their agreement. Thus in answer to the question, "What would you do if your husband demanded you always stay inside the compound?" a woman who had been married to the same man for twenty-five years answered simply, "He is the head of the household," meaning "I must obey." Contrarily, a woman who at the age of thirty-five had been married and divorced four times replied, "Then I would make him divorce me. I would leave him immediately."

While men who are unmarried or between marriages live very similar lives to married men, divorced women are striking in their contrast to their married sisters. A married woman among the Kanuri is tied to her husband's household and

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

885 must ask his permission to do anything. To be seen speaking to another man is
581 grounds for divorce. On the other hand a divorced woman is free. She comes and
[586] goes as she pleases and speaks to whoever she pleases quite freely. Some women quite frankly remark that they prefer this status to that of marriage while others just as strongly remark that they would like to get a husband.

885 In summary, maturity is a time of achievement for men in which they be-
105 come full-fledged members of their community. They marry, try to raise families,
156 and become heads of successful and productive households. Women try to marry
562 successfully and hopefully to have children. However, as I have pointed out else-
182 where, tensions caused by the demands of subordination in their married role pro-
[578] duce strains and rebelliousness that very often leads to the break-up of marriage.[8] In the final analysis the culture is androcentric; there are many means by which men can become successful—through their occupation, their associations with neighbors, relatives, friends, and important men, and through membership and
[592] finally headship of a household. In spite of a turnover in wives associated with the high amount of divorce, the household itself is a stable unit, although its personnel is not. On the other hand, it is the rare Kanuri woman who can achieve a successful adulthood. Many women are barren or have had children who have not survived. Very few women remain married to the same men all their lives and most have had one or more extended periods of being divorced and looking for a husband. By centering on men and emphasizing their needs and wishes, Kanuri culture has produced a strain on women that is a fertile field for changes when modernization produces the possibility of new goals for women and new means for achieving them.

Old Age

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888 Old age is signalled in both sexes by the whitening of body hair even
[826] though other body characteristics may remain strong and healthy. For both old men and women this last period in life means that many of the obligations and responsibilities of adult life are slowly relinquished, although men generally feel that they belong to the adult roles much longer than women. As heads of households and office holders in governmental positions, men wield powers in a number of spheres and give these up slowly and reluctantly as old age drains away their energy and efficiency. Ideally in Kanuri culture a man should reach the golden years of his life in his old age. If all goes well he receives much respect; his work is carried on by descendants, and his position as a household head may have grown to the point where he is the senior authority among a group of households organized along the lines of a patrilocal extended family with clients, sons, brothers, and their wives and families looking to him for leadership. When he is very old and becoming progressively infirm, he lets many of these duties pass to mature members of the group. Even then they always consult him on decisions and pay heed to his wishes.

888 The reality in Kanuri society is often far from the ideal although the ideal is a
183 very widely agreed upon goal. To obtain this most desirable position in old age a
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[8] See Ronald Cohen, "Marriage instability among the Kanuri of Northern Nigeria," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 63, 1231–1249.

His first marriage fre-
582 quently is with a kalɔ yaskɔ, but this is not always the case.
[587] Many young men of poor families marry a zogor when they marry
[556] for the first time. Since polygamy is permitted, and under Islamic law a man may have as many as four wives, men of important and wealthy families take more than one wife, and prefer to marry a kalɔ yaskɔ each time.

• 885 302 It was mentioned that the kalɔ yaskɔ takes her name from the hair-do worn by girls before maturity. After marriage, with the permission of her young husband, she will have her hair redone according to the style which characterizes an adult woman. Thereafter she is not a kalɔ yaskɔ; she takes her place with
586 adults. Should she be divorced by her husband, she would re-
885 turn to the protection of her luwali. She is then eligible for marriage once again, though now she approaches the situation as a grown woman, and of course, one who is not inexperienced in sex.
[587] Attitudes attending the marriage of a kalɔ yaskɔ, and much of the ceremony involved, are no longer appropriate when a zogor marries.

586 A woman who becomes a zogor suddenly finds that she has a great deal of freedom in her behavior. Her luwali, or some older friend or relative, provides her with a room in his household,
[535] and men come to court her. She participates in the frequent outdoor dancing in which only zogors take a part since no self-
584 respecting husband would permit his wife to dance publicly. An
587 unmarried man enters into a relationship with a zogor which
[431] ideally should end in their marriage. If he is not already married, he comes to visit the zogor regularly, bringing her presents of clothing and jewelry. It is accepted that a man court-

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[589] husbands. These women (sower) are sexually available to all men, and are given gifts and market money for the sexual privileges they grant. The typical adolescent male has his first sexual experiences with a woman older than himself. However, when he decides to marry he usually tries to find a woman of roughly his own or of a junior age group.

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581 First marriage marks the beginning of adult status for a man. The event announces and enables a move towards semi-independence which is aided and abetted by the avoidance relation between his father and his wife, as well as by the subject-matter avoidance of his marriage in conversations with his parents. Furthermore, he now commands an independent source of cooked food, which he can use for hospitality and its return, whereas previously he was obliged to others for this service. Kanuri males consider this to be one of the most important reasons for getting married, especially at the lower ranks of society.

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437 To understand the value placed on this function of marriage it must be realized that men from about the age of fifteen or sixteen onwards like to eat in the company of other men. Without a wife, a young man must join a group of eaters one (or more) of whose wives prepare the food. For this privilege he is obligated to the food provider, an obligation which may include hoeing his farm, going on messages for him, helping him repair his compound, etc. With a wife a young man can return eating favours on the same terms, thus equating himself to his hosts and creating obligation (a) for return meals from men who have wives, and (b)

581 of a diffuse nature from men who have none. It will be shown later that a wife is also valued as a socio-economic asset in the determination of her husband's productive capacities.

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434 Today, almost all men in rural areas, and many in the city, derive some of the money for marriage from the cash crop. This determines

881 582 informants feel that it is better if a girl is married before she menstruates and claim that religion prescribes this as the best kind of first marriage for a girl. Exceptions are, of course, quite common and not regarded as very bad as long as the girl is a "virgin" (i.e. 585 proven so on her wedding night). When she marries for the first time [302] a girl does not automatically change her status. She is still considered a fero gana (a small girl) just as she was before marriage, and for some little time continues to wear her hair in the young girl style. As one informant put it:

[833] 881 [885] She knows nothing, she copulates yes, but takes no interest in such things, there is no pleasure in it for her. When she bleeds, then she is kamu kura (a mature woman) and she knows everything and will take pleasure from sexual intercourse. When the first blood comes the girl will feel shame and tell no one, only her close friends, who will tell her mother. Her mother will come and gather together her friends and relatives (female) and cook food and give sada'a (offerings to the poor).

885 [302] Sometime after the onset of menstruation the young girl changes her hair style to the typical and distinctive styling of the adult Kanuri woman. It is not necessary for her to become a completely different person immediately upon taking up the status of married woman. Indeed, she still retains many of her childhood friends. In a completely new locale she first obtains age-mate friends who are, as often as not, pre-pubertal children.

Over the first one or two years of marriage, young brides are more and more to be seen with the other adult women of the compound and the neighbourhood whose main activities and interests centre around marketing, cooking, obtaining water, gossiping and engaging in women's festivities. Less and less are they interested in playing and chatting with the young pre-pubertal children, whose activities become progressively remote from their own.

000 come progressively remote from their own.

548 [369] Exceptions to the normal pattern occur. In some cases the girls become prostitutes (alangnoma), although this is more common in the urban areas where there is less visibility and higher demand for this stigmatized occupation. In Hagumeri village, there was one active prostitute of whom it was said she had never been properly married. 589 Another young woman of about eighteen to twenty years had not as yet been married. In 1956, she was still wearing the small girls' hair style, which she finally changed in 1957 to that of an adult woman. Her slightly sub-normal intelligence was socially recognized, and to this characteristic was attributed her inability to obtain a husband. She was, by 1957, trying to identify herself as a sower, i.e. a divorced woman. That is to say, she declared herself openly available sexually to all males. Informants claimed that her chances of finding a husband were exceedingly slim. Another girl of fourteen or fifteen had already passed puberty and was unmarried. Rumour and gossip ran around that she was not a virgin, i.e. adult men had slept with her, and it was said that her father would have a very difficult time ever finding a husband who would take her as wife. The child seemed to be suffering increasingly from her inability to identify herself as a girl awaiting marriage or as a developing young woman which all her agemates had by now become.

885 582 871 These exceptions exemplify a basic precept of Kanuri culture. In order to obtain a normal status in the society a female must have had a first marriage in or around the time of puberty. Failure to do so inhibits her achievement of respectable adult status. This is one of the primary reasons why European Secondary education for Kanuri girls receives so much opposition from the local population. The idea

885 582 871 of any institutional prolongation of a girl's unmarried status beyond puberty is regarded by the people as leading to the ruin of her normal development as it is conceived in the culture. (This opposition is also exacerbated by the fear of a loss of power of dispensation over the girl by her guardian when she attends school).

881 304 For young boys the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence is marked by circumcision. It is apparent from the variation in age, running anywhere from seven to twelve years for the circumcision of boys, that physiological maturation has very little to do with the timing of the ceremony for any particular boy. The boy's family, especially the head of the household (usually his father), decides the issue on the basis of family readiness to perform the ceremony. Often a large group of boys, sometimes as many as thirty or forty in large towns, are cut when a leading family performs a circumcision for one of its members.

The important thing for the Kanuri is not the readiness of any particular young boy for the ceremony in terms of either his behavioural or physiological development: The deciding factor is the auspiciousness of the occasion in terms of the family's relationships with the rest of the community. Is there a large circumcision taking place this year? Have a lot of friends and relatives been asking repeatedly when little Aba is going to be circumcised? Have the household members, especially the head, attended a great many marriages, naming ceremonies, etc., of other community members and given gifts on these occasions? Is it now time to reap the benefit of all that participation by having a ceremony of one's own, to which many people will come and many gifts of goods and money will be obtained? These

882 at least one non-agricultural occupation, even if it is just the marketing of agricultural commodities as is the case with surplus producers.

882 In summary then, adolescence (in the limited sense referred to above) sharply divides male and female roles. The female has taken on her role as a married woman and it is within this status that she completes the learning of skills necessary for her adult role in society. Her status attributes may shift and change during her mature life. She may become single again (most women do), remarry, and bear children, but the framework of her adulthood is entered into at first virilocal marriage, at or before puberty. For the boy, adolescence is socially entered into at his circumcision and congeals psychologically after physiological puberty. He utilizes this period to learn the multitude of interpersonal and occupational skills which he requires as an adult, and a potential family head.

582 One of the interesting functional results of having an [561] extra age status for males only is its artificial increase in the [165] availability of women for marriage. If we consider for the sake of [162] argument that the Kanuri life span is sixty years and the ratio of men to women is roughly one to one,(1) then with women marrying roughly around the age of ten to twelve and men marrying roughly around the age of twenty to twenty-two, women are marriageable for approximately fifty and men for forty years respectively. In other words, women would be of marriageable status one-fifth longer in time relative to men.(2)

(1) Bornu Census: 1951. Males: 790, 361. Females: 805, 347.
(2) If the life span is put at a smaller figure, as it probably ought to be to correspond with the facts, then this ratio would be larger because the length of adolescence is a constant.

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162 This means that although the proportion of the sexes to one another is approximately equal numerically, there would be more women available for marriage than men if the society were not polyg-
121 nous. It would be interesting to check cross-culturally whether or not in monogamous societies marriage is associated more with equal ages among mates at its first inception and whether or not polygyny is also associated most often with early female and late male first marriages.

Maturity

• 885 The culture defines a mature man as rashidi. Ideally this connotes that he is married, is not immoderately adulterous, has a compound of his own, an occupation, the use of some land for farming, a recognized position in the community organization as the head of a compound in a ward, or hamlet, a degree of independence which includes the right to move to another community if he wishes, and if he has children, the label is even more applicable. Thus rashidi as a status implies the values which the culture places upon adult male life. It is therefore not only a description of a man's age status, but an evaluation of his accomplishments and behaviour as an adult male in relation to the value system of the culture.

[184] A few informants, notably higher ranking people, felt that a man should be over 30-35 years of age before he could be defined as rashidi. Most others were more inclined to disregard the age criteria and claim that any man who had been married was a rashidi.

[831] When a young man is divorced and has no other wives, or even if he is married but is known to be especially attentive to other women he is jokingly referred to as zairo (any person who has not been married,

885 831 but who has been circumcised, more often referring to the sexually active). In discussing this point further, informants remarked that such persons were not true zairo but they acted like them. The joking implied in this designation is not nearly as humourous to the bearers, when applied to a divorced man with no present wife (who really has many status similarities to an older adolescent) as when it is applied to a married man who is continually seeking extra-marital sexual relations. This joking reference to the married man being a zairo points up the ideal of mildly chaste behaviour property to the rashidi status.

156 885 Many young married men who are subordinate to elder relatives, or political and/or economic superiors in large household organizations, or who are still apprentices, refuse to be labelled as rashidi when asked, even though they are married. They plead that they are still tada gana (small boys). They feel that their subservient position and lack of achievement in the areas of behaviour mentioned above, that are considered to be characteristic of rashidi status, puts them in the position of small boys who still have to grow up, or who are under their father's control. For subservient persons whose occupation requires that they remain in close subordinate relationship to a superior for most of their lives, the criteria of marriage, children, age, own compound, and farm plots, slowly begin to change the person's concept of himself and he comes to accept a label of rashidi if it is put to him as a question. However, he understands the limits of its application in his particular case. For example, one informant of about forty-five, whose father had been a servant of the District Head's father and who was himself a life-long servant of the District Head, accepted a definition of himself as a rashidi (mature man), who

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885 would, he said laughingly, soon be a chiari (an old man). He explained that he had a married daughter, a farm, a compound, and a wife, who he proudly asserted had stayed with him for eight years, and for all these reasons he was a rashidi. But when asked in the same context if he would ever go to live somewhere independently of his superior's headquarters, without instructions he quickly replied, "atò ngai wuma tada gana" (in that sense I am a small boy). In other words, in that particular area of behaviour generally associated with rashidi status I am not a participant as one who is a grown man, rather I am like a young son who must obey his father. This is not in any way shameful for the informant, since his status in the subservient relationship to the District Head is accepted by the culture.

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562 Rashidi is then more than just a description of physiolcgical age. In general people consider that when a man has been married he should be defined as having reached adult status. But when the term is applied to an adult male who had been married, it is found that a set of achievements is used as a criterion for judging a person's age grade status. These achievements are valued attributes of adult male life as defined by the culture which are available in varying degrees to all male members of the society.

A woman who has had a child can be referred to as kuko, which means that she has achieved the important goal of motherhood and has added a new member to her husband's agnatic group as well as to her own. Middle aged women (about thirty to forty) can be referred to as gudum to distinguish them from younger or older women, whether or not they have borne children. In actual practice these terms were not observed to be in common use, the woman's status and age being

885 562 described in other terms. The main distinctions for women are, fero (girl), Kamu (woman) and Kamursu (old woman). A woman (kamu) can be given descriptive attributes to place her properly in people's minds. For example, she can be kamu kwanzè mbeji (a woman with a husband, i.e. married), or sanzè ngubu or gana (older or younger). These can be extended to include statuses such as having borne children or not, having an influential family, having a rich husband, being in seclusion and so on.

There is no similar status term among women comparable to the male term rashidi whose meaning also connotes or embodies the ideology of mature behaviour.

The ideal view of the adult female role positively evaluates marriage, durability of marriage, children, obedience to husband, proper and efficient performance of women's tasks, chastity, staying in husband's compound much of the time, and maintaining some contact with her own family as some of the more important goals towards which 183 adult females should strive. In actual practice, women who divorce 885 the least number of times give their unqualified support to the cultur- 562 al ideal of the female role. On the other hand, women who divorce 586 easily and frequently tend to qualify their support of the ideal. This contrast is illustrated by the answer to the question, "What would you do if your husband required you to stay always in the compound?" A woman, who had been married to the same man for twenty-five years, answered simply, shi kura fatobe (he is the head of the household), i.e. he is my authoritative superior and I must obey. Contrarily, a woman, who at the age of about thirty-five had married and divorced four times, replied, daji lenyin (then I would go away), i.e. divorce him.

882 will lead them to their adult roles in the socio-economic structure of
582 the society. Since boys do not marry until the end of this period, first marriages are much later for males as compared to females.

885 By maturity, the Kanuri mean several things. For a man it means that he is married, has a compound of his own, an occupation, the use of some land for farming, a recognized position in the community organization as the head of a household and some degree of independence. When some of these social attributes are lacking the person often refers to himself as a "small boy" no matter what his age. There is no one status term meaning maturity for females, although terms exist which define her status as a woman who has had a child or not, as middle aged, and so on.

888 Old age for women often means dependence upon her sons if she has any, plus some petty trade in order to help sustain herself economically. For men, old age can be viewed on a continuum running from the one pole of successful seniority achieved or ascribed during life, to its opposable and supportative complement, subordination. Some achieve their seniority, others support this achievement by acting as subordinates, sometimes only as stepping stones to their own growth in seniority, or at other times, as a life goal in itself. However, it should be remembered that all men, even the Shehu, are in some sense subordinate in the total social structure.

56 The discussion of stratification has been organized within a theoretical framework in which the complex differentiation of Kanuri society is classified into status dimensions. These are sets of agreed upon rankings pf persons within some specified area of behaviour. For the present discussion the status dimensions of ethnic membership, occupation, birth ascription, wealth, and rural/urban status, have been considered in some detail.